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I. United States

1. DPRK on ROK Presidential Impeachment

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "NORTH KOREA CLAIMS SOUTH IN 'ANARCHY,'" Seoul, 03/16/04) reported that the DPRK claimed the ROK was in a "state of anarchy" Tuesday as the ROK braced for a prolonged legal and politically charged battle over whether to unseat President Roh Moo-hyun. The ROK's leadership upheaval has raised concern that the DPRK may use the political turmoil to complicate six-nation talks aimed at resolving the DPRK nuclear crisis. On Tuesday, the ROK's interim leader, Prime Minister Goh Kun, urged an early resumption of the negotiations between the US, the DPRK and ROK, the PRC, Russia and Japan. The DPRK said "instability" makes the ROK an unsafe place to travel. Continuing the argument Tuesday, the DPRK accused ROK opposition parties of "creating the present state of anarchy and making it impossible for both sides to have even a safe contact."

2. ROK Presidential Impeachment

The Associated Press (Sang-hun Choe, "SOUTH KOREA BRACES FOR IMPEACHMENT BATTLE," Seoul, 03/16/04) reported that the ROK Parliament voted Friday to impeach Roh for alleged election-

law violations and incompetence. The Constitutional Court has 180 days to uphold the impeachment or restore Roh's presidential powers. Goh, who is leading the administration until the ruling, has repeatedly urged the Constitutional Court to make a quick decision. But on Tuesday the chief prosecutor said the hearings will probably take months. "A much simpler case takes months to deliberate," said Kim Ki-choon, a member of the opposition Grand National Party and chairman of the National Assembly's Legislation and Judiciary Committee. "I don't think this case of grave importance, where there are many points to verify and argue over, can be finished within a month." Roh has said he will step down if the small, liberal Uri Party that supports him fares poorly April 15 parliamentary elections. The ROK's financial markets seemed to recover from the initial shock of the impeachment. The main stock index bounced back Monday and finished down just slightly on Tuesday. Also Tuesday, 3,000 people turned out in Seoul to protest the impeachment. The number of protesters dropped sharply to 3,500 people on Monday from the 50,000 who converged over the weekend to wave candles chant for the president's reinstatement.

3. IAEA on DPRK Inspections

Agence France-Presse ("UN NUCLEAR WATCHDOG WANTS TO RETURN TO NORTH KOREA," Washington, 03/16/04) reported that UN nuclear watchdog chief Mohamed ElBaradei said Monday he would like inspectors to return as soon as possible to the DPRK, which has allegedly received black market supplies to make atomic weapons. "We know that some of the enrichment equipment according to Khan was also transferred to North Korea," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief ElBaradei said in Washington, where he is to meet with US President George W. Bush on Wednesday. "Unfortunately, we are not in North Korea today to verify that," ElBaradei told reporters after meeting non-proliferation advocate Senator Richard Lugar. "I would like to see the agency going back to North Korea as early as possible and to make sure that North Korea again has a program that is absolutely dedicated for peaceful purposes," he said. "If that were to happen under international verification, North Korea would be able to join the international community as a full-fledged member and I hope that will happen soon," ElBaradei said.

4. Taiwan Presidential Elections Public Health

Agence France-Presse ("COUNTING THE COST OF DEMOCRACY: SORE THROATS AND DODGY BACKS," 03/17/04) reported that Taiwan's vigorous young democracy is proving a little too vibrant for some. Wild mood swings, lost voices, and bad backs have all accompanied the island's presidential election campaign -- and that is just the supporters. Psychiatrist couches have been filled by a new wave of activists with "election mania disorder" who have become a little too active in the campaign ahead of Taiwan's March 20 poll. "He would go on and on about the election campaign, trying to convince me to vote for his candidate, no matter how much I tried to change the subject," said Adventist Hospital psychiatrist Hsu Cheng-tien about one patient. The man, diagnosed with the disorder that includes mood swings, anxiety attacks and insomnia among the symptoms, left his job to concentrate on attending rallies and spent 300,000 Taiwan dollars (9,000 US) on campaign souvenirs, said Hsu. Hospitals have reported a sharp rise in muscle strains and other complaints owing to over-exuberance among the huge crowds that have gathered throughout the island. Wu Chia-che, an ear, nose and throat specialist at Taipei's Wan-Fang hospital, said he had seen a 30 percent increase in numbers of patients who had lost their voices or who had ringing in the ears in the past month. One patient had been to see the doctor three times in a month after damaging shouting too loudly at campaign rallies. Wu ordered him to rest his voice for at least a week but the patient insisted he could bear the pain for a few more weeks. "The patient begged me to increase his medicine dosage and promised to rest as soon as the elections are over," said Wu. The election will be only the island's third freely contested presidential exercise and with the candidates running neck

and neck, the rallies are seen as vital elements for the parties to encourage their voters to turn out. Feelings run high among islanders where decades of martial law that ended only in the late 1980s has promoted a strong desire to vote. A turnout of more than 80 percent is expected.

5. Australia Anti-Terrorism Funding

Agence France-Presse ("AUSTRALIA STEPS UP WAR ON TERROR WITH MASSIVE FUNDING BOOST," 03/17/04) reported that Australia announced a 400-million-dollar (300 million US) funding increase for its intelligence agencies to boost its war on international terrorism. Prime Minister John Howard said the increase, in the May budget, would take total expenditure on national security to about three billion dollars since the attacks in the US on September 11, 2001. The funding increase was planned before the attack which killed more than 200 people in Madrid last week, he said. "That decision was taken before the attack in Madrid, but it is certainly timely," Howard told an Adelaide radio station. "It will bring to about 3.0 billion dollars ... the additional money that has been made available for security-related issues since the attacks on the US in September, 2001." The extra funds will go to the Australia Security Intelligence Organization, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service and the Federal Police.

6. Japan Public on Iraq Troop Dispatch

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN DIVIDED OVER IRAQ TROOP DISPATCH: POLL," 03/16/04) reported that Japanese voters remained divided over the dispatch of Japanese troops to Iraq, with a poll here indicating 42 percent of the public approved while 41 percent opposed the move. But the percentage of those opposed fell sharply from the 48 percent registered in the previous poll taken in February, said the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, which took the survey. Some 44 percent of those polled in February supported dispatching Japanese soldiers to Iraq for a humanitarian mission, the Asahi said. The nationwide telephone poll, which was conducted on Sunday and Monday, received valid answers from 1,896 voters, the Asahi said. Among those who approved dispatching of troops, 24 percent of them said they supported the idea because it contributes to international society.

7. PRC Human Rights

Agence France-Presse ("RIGHTS GROUP CHALLENGES US TO SPONSOR UN BILL CONDEMNING CHINA," Washington, 03/16/04) reported that Human Rights Watch challenged the US to sponsor a resolution condemning the PRC for alleged rights abuses at an ongoing UN meeting in Geneva. "China's implicit threat of deteriorating bilateral relations should not keep the US from condenming human rights abuses when and where they occur," Brad Adams, executive director of the New York-based organisation, said in a statement. Officials in the US had strongly hinted last week that the US would sponsor the resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights, a 53-member UN body which on Monday began its six-week annual session in Geneva. But over the past few days, PRC officials reportedly spoke several times with their US counterparts, including Scretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, to discourage the US from tabling the resolution, Human Rights Watch said. To stave off the resolution, the PRC government had also released a few well-known political prisoners but "without changing its ongoing abusive practices."

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other

NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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